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Spring 1998

Montana Department of Labor and Industry NEWS

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Travel advances - the only way to go

▸ **Tammy Peterson**

By requesting a travel advance, you can avoid spending your own hard-earned money while away on business trips. Pick the advance that's right for you:

- *Temporary advances* are for employees who travel occasionally. When requesting a temporary advance, remember to consider mileage, per diem, lodging, and incidental expenses including taxi or shuttle fare, supplies, postage, and other business-related expense you may incur.
- *Permanent advances* are for employees you travel extensively. Your supervisor can authorize your request for a permanent advance based on the cost of your average monthly travel expenses. This type of advance stays in your account for your travel convenience. You reimburse your account every time you submit a travel voucher.

Travel advances and reimbursements are processed through payroll. Please submit your request to the Fiscal Support Bureau no later than the Tuesday before the payday which precedes the payday you wish to receive the payment. If you have any questions concerning travel advances and/or employee reimbursement, feel free to call Faye Dubois at ext. 3648 or Bonnie Fisher at ext. 6847.

State to Receive $6 Million for Welfare to Work

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▸ **Connie Kinsey**

What is Welfare to Work? The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 authorizes $3 billion nationwide for a Welfare to Work Grant initiative that will provide needed resources for states and localities to create job opportunities for the hardest-to-employ welfare recipients. These funds will *complement* the services provided to welfare recipients under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and allow for a continuum of services.

How much money is Montana eligible to draw down? Seventy-five percent (75%) of the 3 billion earmarked for Welfare to Work is referred to as a formula grant that is an entitlement to the states with a 2 to 1 federal to state match and 25% is set aside for competitive grants. Montana is scheduled to receive $3.203 million in formula money for Fiscal Year 1998 and $2.985 million in Fiscal Year 1999. A match of $1.6 million is needed the first year and $1.5 million the second. Of the amount of money coming to Montana, 85% will pass through the local Private Industry Councils onto service providers chosen through a public solicitation process. The remaining 15% ($485,000) is set aside for special projects from the Governor's office.

Interested persons attended public meetings in Helena, Missoula, Billings and Great Falls

What is the purpose of the Welfare to Work Program? Welfare to Work is a "work first" program intended to ease the transition of hard-to-employ welfare to work recipients into transitional employment opportunities which will lead to lasting unsubsidized employment and self-sufficiency. Welfare to work will provide a variety of activities including job readiness activities, employment activities that consist of community service programs; work experience programs; job creation through public or private sectors; and on-the-job training. Activities also include post employment services; job retention supportive services such as transportation and child care assistance; and intake, assessment, development of an individual service plan and case management.

Who is Targeted to Receive Services from Welfare to Work? To receive Welfare to Work services a person must:

1. a. be a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipient;
   b. have 2 or 3 barriers to employment;
   (1) no high school diploma or GED and have low skills in reading or math
   (2) requires substance abuse treatment for employment
   (3) poor work history (has worked no more than 3 of the last 12 months)

continued on page 2

COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Commissioner Pat Haffey

New Policies

The Department of Labor and Industry wants to ensure that working conditions are fair, safe and consistent for employees throughout the department.

The Information Technology and Electronic Communications Policy and the Early Return-to-Work Policy Statement will soon be provided to you so that you have a clear understanding of both your and the department's responsibilities. I hope you will make yourself familiar with the specifics of the policies. I also hope you will agree that the policies help to ensure fair, safe and consistent conditions for all Department employees.

The Information Technology and Electronic Communications Policy is a three page document that includes important information for all computer users in our agency. I won't explain the document, but I want to reiterate the critical message: "*Don't say, do, write, view, or acquire anything that you wouldn't be proud to have everyone in the world learn about if the electronic records are laid bare.*"

The Early Return-to-Work Policy Statement represents DLI's commitment to assisting our injured employees to return to work as soon as medically appropriate, and to work with the medical community to help injured employees regain their livelihood and maintain their self-respect. Again, I won't explain the benefits of the Early Return-to-Work Policy, but I will share a statement that I believe carries an important message: "*It makes more sense to put a strong fence around the top of the cliff than an ambulance down in the valley.*" Let's continue to focus our energy on preventing the accidents, knowing the department will do what it can to assist our employees who are injured.

Welfare to Work

continued from page 1

2. non-custodial parent of a minor whose custodial parent meets the requirements in item 1.
3. have 2 or 3 barriers to employment
   (1) no high school diploma or GED AND have low skills in reading or math
   (2) requires substance abuse treatment for employment
   (3) poor work history (has worked no more than 3 of the last 12 months)

AND no longer receiving TANF, reached the time limits, but otherwise eligible

What are the strategies for serving the hardest-to-employ populations through Welfare to Work? Some of the strategies will be to use employer-connections, job counseling and placement services to provide job opportunities; use supportive services of the welfare and workforce development systems to help individuals remove barriers to employment and help them remain in jobs; working with the transportation community to ensure the transportation needs of those moving from welfare to work are met; and increase the active involvement of businesses to hire eligible welfare recipients, train and retrain them, and provide opportunities for promotion as appropriate.

Public meetings were attended by county welfare directors, employment training service providers, private industry council members and welfare advocate groups

Welfare to Work for Montana: Thanks to the partnership between this department, the Department of Public Health and Human Services and the Job Training Partnership Act Private Industry Councils' staff at Montana Job Training Partnership, Inc., Montana's State Welfare to Work Plan (amendment to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families State Plan) for operating the welfare to work program will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor on March 31, 1998.

The State Welfare to Work Plan describes the program design; local targeting strategies; policy and program implementation; roles and responsibilities; monitoring and oversight for quality program outcomes; and the strategies in preventing duplication of services and promoting coordination between welfare to work, temporary assistance to needy families, one-stop centers and other employment and training systems throughout the state. The draft Welfare to Work plan was out for public comment in January and February. Interested persons attended public meetings in Helena, Missoula, Billings and Great Falls.

Welfare to Work service providers will be selected by the Private Industry Councils through a solicitation process and the date for implementing the Welfare to Work program is July 1, 1998. Montana Job Training Partnership, Inc. will be the Administrative Entity for Montana's Welfare to Work program.

Court Proposes New Rules

• **Clarice Beck**

On April 30, 1998, the Court proposes to amend some of its existing rules and adopt a new procedural rule regarding the recusal of the Judge. The rules will be published by the Secretary of State on March 26th with a comment period of 28 days. The changes are also to be published by the MONTANA LAWYER, a publication by the Montana State Bar Association and the information is available on the Court's WEB page.

For the first time in its existence, the Court has specifically requested *amicus curiae* briefs regarding an issue before the Court. A mass mailing was made to lawyers practicing before the Court, interested persons in the medical profession and other interested parties. The issue relates to whether attorney fees may be taken out of medical benefits payable to medical providers. Submissions must be filed in the Court on or before April 27, 1998, at which time Judge McCarter will determine whether to conduct an Oral Argument on the issue before decision.

On a heavier note, the Court once again has formed a team to participate in the ***Move to Improve*** activities. The entire court staff and two local district court judges will undoubtedly be seen during the coming months exerting themselves [moving] in some fashion in an effort to improve. Interestingly, the name they chose for themselves ***THE RUMINATORS*** has nothing to do with physical activity unless one considers the activity of chewing! I am certain they were thinking of the more cerebral meaning of to meditate. Watch out for them, they may not be able to move and ruminate at the same time.

Use of Computers

▸ **Ken McElroy**

The Office of Personnel Services has been working on a revised policy to replace the current policy 3.20 ***Use of Computers.*** This effort follows upon recent efforts by the state Information Technology Advisory group (ITAC) to formulate a statewide policy on Internet use. That policy now lays out some basic guidelines and asks that Agencies devise their own policy to govern the swiftly growing access and use of the Internet by state employees. Our own draft policy is patterned after the state's and will cover several issues including:

- √ Appropriate use of state resources (hardware, software, network connections)
- √ Appropriate etiquette and procedures related to safety and security in their use
- √ Issues related to expectation of privacy when using state IT communications technology

Management team members have reviewed the draft policy and offered their comments. We expect to make final revisions and adopt a policy at the April Administrator's meeting and will promptly thereafter provide the proposed policy to the MPEA for their comment. Employees should expect to see the new policy sometime in the next few months.

Fiscal Bureaus Combined

▸ **Tammy Peterson**

Effective January 1, 1998, the former Accounting and Budget Bureaus have combined to form the **Fiscal Support Bureau.** The new bureau will continue to provide services offered by the former bureaus including: budget and legislative services; financial reporting; accounts payable and receivable; purchasing; payroll; and everybody's favorite, time distribution. Once vacant positions are filled, we will distribute a Fiscal Support "yellow page" listing names, duties, and phone numbers.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Labor Mediators

▸ **Paul Melvin**

The labor mediation function is located in the Collective Bargaining Unit of the Labor Standards Bureau, Employment Relations Division, and is a mandatory non-binding process provided by statute. It is the job of the two Labor Mediators to serve as catalysts in the process of collective bargaining for the public sector in the state of Montana.

Mediator Staff pictured are : Paul Melvin Kathy Van Hook and Jennifer Jacobson

The words in labor agreements reflect long-term relationships and practices between the parties and interpretations that have evolved over time. Labor mediators are expected to be familiar with the collective bargaining process, employment and labor law and the subject matter to be mediated. We serve the parties to a dispute as they struggle to find answers amidst the anxiety, anger and optimism that drive the reactions to change. We try to manage those reactions so that emotions are tempered by reason.

In addition to providing mediation services during times of bargaining impasse, we also mediate grievance disputes and offer training to bargaining teams in Interest Based Bargaining and Interest Based Problem Solving methods for Labor Management Committees. The interest based approach allows the parties to reach higher quality technical solutions in ways that enhance trust between the parties.

The demand for mediation assistance during labor disputes is increasing and our caseload has risen to slightly more than double the number of requests for the same time period during the last fiscal year. Similarly, requests for training are on the increase as are requests for us to facilitate problem solving work sessions. It is most gratifying for us to help the parties to deal with current & past problems and refocus on the future.

Individual Spotlight

As The Wood Turns- A new soap opera?

▸ **John Andrew**

No, this is the first in a series of articles that look at hobbies and activities of Department of Labor and Industry employees. First on the block - John Andrew, of Labor Standards.

If you have been by the landfill lately (John says all of Helena's finest residents are there sooner or later) you know that John is a frequent visitor as well. Why? This is where John finds pieces of trees to turn into wooden bowls. You see, John is a wood turner, meaning that he fashions the wood he finds around town into beautiful bowls. When turned and finished on a lathe the bowls are the ultimate in recycling and wood turning is the finest of hobbies. If you haven't seen them and are interested, give John a call and he'll be glad to show you his wares.

A sample of John's work

John Andrew is the Bureau Chief of the Labor Standards Bureau within the Employment Relations Division. The Labor Standards Bureau consists of the units of Wage and Hour and Collective Bargaining.

In Your Corner With Safety

▸ **Jean Branscum**

Job Service Safety Coordinators and Safety Committee representatives have wrapped up their work on emergency action plans for their buildings. The action plans describe the procedures you would follow if a violent incident occurs in your building. Work continues on the plans, but the focus has turned to training employees. Many thanks to all who contributed to these efforts!

The department is pursuing plans to offer safety training related to violence in the workplace and basic first aid/adult CPR. Employees will receive training notices as those are organized.

Several new faces have joined the department's safety committee as membership terms expired for Diane West, Mark Weggenman and Kate Kahle. The new members are Michele Wigert, Centralized Services; Bob Thornton and Leslie Williams, local Job Service Centers; and Eric Johnson, Job Service.

New Legislative System

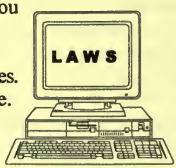
▸ **Cheryl Grey**

The Governor's Office of Budget and Program Planning (OBPP) and Legislative Services as well as contracted staff from BDM are in the final stages of developing a new legislative tracking system called the Legislative Automated Workflow System (LAWS).

The Dept. of Administration (DOA) has committed to making this an enterprise system whereby DOA will give direction and work with the agencies in accessing the new system. This should significantly reduce or eliminate the need for individual agencies to develop their own legislative tracking systems. A statewide task force has been formed to identify common agency needs that can be satisfied, if possible, before the system is finalized.

The new system will have the following advantages:

- **Integrated System** -The new system uses the Internet to integrate the Bill Status system (now in Oracle, formerly mainframe) and the Bill Text (using WordPerfect 8.0). You will be able to download and print bill text if desired.
- **Enhanced Capabilities** - Apparently, the new system has all the capabilities of the old system, plus a whole lot more...
- **Advanced Searches** - You will be able to perform advanced searches. For example, you may perform searches by agency, sponsor, or subject. You may also search the text of the bills for specific language.
- **Preference List** - It's anticipated that you will be able to create a "Preference List" whereby you can mark your favorite bills, prioritize them, and track them.
- **Reports** - You will be able to generate numerous reports.
- **Live Data** - It is hopeful that data will be live as opposed to running batches for periodic updates.
- **Agendas** - Both the hearings calendar and the agenda for the 2nd/3rd readings will be available.



Other capabilities proposed or suggested include:

- **Fiscal Note Tracking** - Ability to track fiscal notes.
- **Assign Agency Staff & Position** - Ability to assign agency staff to a bill and note their position on the bill (support or oppose, along with explanation).

If you are interested in a preview of what has already been developed, take a look on the Internet at http://158.114.109.15/Laws/owa/cshome.show. Or for additional information, contact Cheryl Grey at 2613.

Hunter's Participation on Board of Regents Benefits State

▸ **Chuck Hunter**

About a year ago, I was asked to serve as one of the Board of Regents for the International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions' (IAIABC) Workers' Compensation College. Recently, I was asked to describe what that job entails, and what it might mean to our state. Here is the quick and dirty version.

The IAIABC is the professional association of workers' compensation regulatory people from the 50 states and the Canadian provinces. IAIABC has three organizations: 1) the regular professional association, which puts on an annual conference, lobbies on workers' compensation issues on a national level, and has working committees to try to solve problems in the workers' compensation industry; 2) the Workers' Compensation Foundation, whose job is to raise money to help fund research and improvements in workers' compensation practices; and 3) the Workers' Compensation College, which is charged with putting on an annual week long educational event for workers' compensation professionals working in the regulatory field.

There are five members of the Board of Regents. We are responsible for the College, including everything from planning the location three years in advance to setting the curriculum, finding the best possible speakers, and so on. The College has existed for 25 years, so there is a wealth of history and experience that guides the content of the annual session. Our focus as Regents is to ensure the educational opportunity we provide is of the highest quality. The reputation of the college allows us to draw on the best minds and practitioners in the international workers' compensation community.

Each Regent also has a role to represent their region of the country. I represent the western region, comprising sixteen states including Texas, California, Alaska, Hawaii, Montana of course, and the Navaho Nation. It is my job to ensure western interests are represented at the College, both in terms of subject matter and of the location of the College.

The College is organized into two "tracks": an executive track for those who work in posts related to administering a regulatory system, and a judicial track for attorneys, administrative law judges and commissioners (for those states who have appointed commissioners that oversee decisions and appeals). Many college attendees are newly appointed commissioners or "executive directors" of their state's systems, and they come to get an in-depth overview of how workers' compensation systems work around the country. Many other attendees are long term professionals in workers' comp., who return to get the best new information available about their field.

How does this benefit Montana? I would say the primary benefit is the education I receive while working at the College. I attend the sessions, gain all the information provided to the participants, and I bring that knowledge back to Montana. Secondly, association with the College has allowed us to build a network of other workers' compensation professionals around the country - a network that allows us to find information, advice, and technical assistance quickly when we need it. The Regents' role also allows me to meet cutting edge professionals in workers' comp. from around the country. We have started to be successful at bringing a number of them to Montana to share their experience with our employers, insurers, and our staff.

The need for an Interim Bureau Chief became apparent when the Helena Phone Center began operations adding 28 positions to the Benefits Bureau along with 18 positions in Billings. In addition to the Bureau Chief, three supervisor positions were created.

A Chat with the Phone Center Bureau Chief

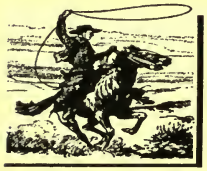
▸ **Nan Nail**

It is said that to everything there is a season and it is a season of change for the Benefits Bureau and the two Unemployment Insurance Telephone Claims Filing Centers.

The Billings Phone Center began operation on October 1, 1996, as a pilot project servicing seven counties. The Helena Phone Center went on line servicing the western part of the state on October 1, 1997. The telephone filing concept has proven highly successful but, as with any new program, it has created it's own set of challenges. New Phone Center Bureau Chief Debbie Olson views those challenges as exciting and an opportunity to create a more solid marriage between the Helena and Billings Centers. Olson began serving as Bureau Chief on March 16th. This is an interim position scheduled for 12 to 18 months.

Olson states her primary function will be to facilitate planning and goal setting by getting people focused and coordinating that focus between the Helena and Billings centers. "Consistency between the two centers to insure everyone is operating from the same guidelines is essential." Definition of final structure and actual administrative duties is still in the planning stages. Olson sees this as "an opportunity to experiment with other structures and pilot ideas."

Though Olson will be operating as the Bureau Chief, she wants to become knowledgeable of the processes used by the Phone Center Customer Service Representatives. Olson believes the exchange of information and ideas will result in a concentrated, coordinated effort by both Phone Centers to provide *Quality Service by Caring, Dedicated People* to the residents of Montana.



Quality Projects. . . A Spring Round Up

The next two pages of the newsletter are in recognition of the many teams and employees in the department who continually strive to improve how we do business. We celebrate their successes to better satisfy our customer needs and to provide our customers value for their tax dollars.

New and Exciting Training Opportunities

▸ **Carlotte Payne**

The Employment Relations Division's newly formed Training Committee is off and running with a six week Workers' Compensation training course. The series of classes will cover the history of Workers' Compensation and the role of ERD, the statutes affecting policies and employers, claims and benefits, and the Safety Culture Act.

Following the Workers' Compensation series, training will be offered by the Labor Standards Bureau covering Wage and Hour, Prevailing Wage and Collective Bargaining. Human Rights training will be later presented.

Training Committee members are: Drea Brown, Cathy Brown-Kummer, Kara Christianson, Rhonda McClure, Charlotte Payne, Eileen Shein, Bonnie Thorvilson and Jim Watts.

Communications Team

▸ **Jean Branscum**

The electronic switching system (our menu phone system) is the current focus of the communications team. The project mission is to ensure the current menu is customer friendly.

Data has been compiled to provide insight into if our customers find the system easy to follow and understand, and if they are successful in reaching the desired program area. Currently, the team is in the process of analyzing the data to identify potential areas for improvement.

The team is working to determine if customers find the phone menu system easy to use

The team has already requested some changes be made to the existing menu to reflect recent reorganizations, and to add the option of allowing callers to leave comments about the phone menu system. *You are encouraged to call the department's menu system at 444-3555. Test it out as if you are a customer trying to locate a service. Your comments and suggestions are welcome.*

The team will also use data collected on the menu system for their next project, determining the benefits of a central reception area for the entire department and how it might operate.

The Communications Team consists of Theresa Curtiss, Raini Williams and Jean Branscum. Job Service is in the process of naming a new representative.

HJR 10 Work Group

▸ **John Andrew**

The House Joint Resolution 10 work group continues to meet to discuss ways to improve the processes for resolving employment disputes. As was mentioned in an earlier report, the group did adopt certain changes in the Workers' Compensation area. Those changes have been referred to the Workers' Compensation Advisory Council for consideration by that group.

In its most recent meeting the HJR 10 group continued its review of appellate functions of the Board of Labor Appeals, Human Rights Commission and the Board of Personnel Appeals. One option considered by the group would replace these boards and substitute a hearing officer decision as the final step in the administrative process, with the decision subject to appeal to the district court. At its most recent meeting the HJR 10 group discussed this concept further with input offered by the boards and their counsel.

The work group also discussed an option that would end the processes of contested case and judicial review. In this option all administrative processes would have an investigatory stage but rather than continuing to a contested case hearing, mediation would be the mandated, final step in the administrative process. From there the parties would take their cases to the district court. As an alternative to the court, one option envisions substituting an employment court, much like the Comp Court, that would hear employment disputes. Appeals from the employment court would then be to the Supreme Court.

If you have any questions or thought about HJR10 or any of its recommendations or proposals please see John Svaldi or John Andrew.

New Budgeting System

▸ **Cheryl Gray**

MBARS (Montana Budget Analysis and Reporting System) is scheduled to be available to agencies in April. Agency staff have been trained on EFF (Executive Planning Process) and Capital Projects. General Budget training will be scheduled for June and Fiscal Note training will be scheduled in the fall.

The MBARS software will be distributed to Information Technology staff in the divisions for fiscal staff to access. Fiscal Support Bureau staff will have MBARS available to them in the event division fiscal staff are unable to access the system.

Please contact Cheryl Grey or Tammy Peterson if you have any questions.

The round continues . . .

Miller Lends Hand On National Think Tank

▸ **Tina Hash**

Annette Miller opted to serve on the America's Learning Exchange Consortia and ended up being elected as content chair of the organization, for a possible three-year stint.

Miller, Office of Research and Analysis Workforce Information director, said America's Learning Exchange (ALX) was created by the U.S. Dept. of Labor, working in cooperation with a consortium of states and other collaborators. It's the newest component of America's Career Kit, the one-stop World Wide Web shopping mall. Users of the services can search for job openings, post resumes, identify education and training related to their skill needs and locate labor market information related to occupational interests.

America's Job Bank, America's Talent Bank, America's Career InfoNet & America's Learning Exchange (slated to open September) are the four main components of the Internet services. America's Job Bank has the largest listing of job openings in the world; America's Talent Bank is a nationwide database of electronic resumes for employers; America's Career InfoNet offers occupational information and America's Learning Exchange will provide the education, training and resources available for people to obtain their educational and training pursuits.

ALX will organize the education and training market making it easier for customers to locate and access appropriate education and training resources. Miller said the goal is to promote more investment by individuals and businesses in lifelong learning, especially in developing skills in the workplace. The future holds the possibility of never leaving the office to receive training and educational courses. "Courses and training will be at your fingertips and available to you instantly," she said.

As content group chair, Miller is responsible for organizing their work, as well as sitting on the planning team.

Surplus Property

▸ **Brenda Bennett**

Thanks to all who took time out of their busy schedules to attend the Surplus Property meeting. Because we had representation from a majority of the department's divisions, we were able to implement a change in the way surplus property will be handled.

The change will be implemented in April. The benefits of the changes are:

✓Faster service when surplusing
✓Direct contact with State Surplus Property for emergency pickups
✓First hand knowledge of what is happening with surplus property without going through a middle person
✓Less paperwork to complete
✓Less paperwork being passed from one place to another
✓Less likely to lose paperwork

Updated procedures, a list of current property officers, and information on State Surplus Property locations and telephone numbers will be sent to employees before the implementation date.

CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION

▸ **Drea Brown**

The Construction Contractor Registration staff has accomplished great improvements. The staff has turned a long, complex registration process into a simple process. They now have a two to three-day turn around time for getting a business registered.

The list of registered contractors is now available to the public on the Internet. This makes it very convenient for a business to check on the registered contractors. They also made it possible for businesses to access the registration list at Job Service and Chamber of Commerce offices. The staff updates the list every two weeks.

Staff is busy writing an informational flyer to distribute to construction businesses and the public. The flyer explains the purpose of the program and how to register. They are also composing a newsletter that they will send to construction companies in the database.

Congratulations staff on great work!

Mail Team

▸ **Jean Branscum**

The mail team is in the process of determining the most cost effective and efficient method to deliver the mail services valued most by department employees.

Over the past few months the team has developed a list of the mail services currently being delivered, completed a high level flow diagram to become more aware of the current mail process, and identified the external and internal customers of the mailroom.

More recently, the team distributed a survey to unit supervisors and/or bureau chiefs and to high end users of the mail room. The survey results are in the process of being analyzed. The results will help identify customer needs and lay the groundwork for the team to design a mailroom that provides services you value and develop processes that will increase customer satisfaction.

The mail team consists of Raini Williams, Diane West, Steve Randall, Colleen Scow and Suzie Gable. Jean Branscum is serving as facilitator.

The **Montana Department of Labor and Industry's** *News* is published quarterly for the Department's employees.

EDITOR: Jean Branscum
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Diane West
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VOLUNTEER STAFF:
Tina Hash, Job Service Division
Nan Nail, Unemployment Insurance Division
Mickey Lindgren & Clara Wilson, Workers' Compensation Court
Bev Pickett & Mary Schilla, Centralized Services Division
Kara Christianson, Employment Relations Division

Contact Jean at 444-1520 or Diane at 444-6845 if you have comments on this issue or have suggestions for articles.

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEES

EAC Happenings

▸ **Bev Viets**

Your EAC representatives have been hard at work upholding their mission statement to serve as a resource and advocate for all employees and promote a quality environment at work and in the community.

Items currently on the table include: sponsoring Brown Bag lunches with our Commissioner, Pat Haffey, to discuss timely topics of interest to all employees; offering self-defense training to interested employees and their families at no charge; providing lunch for students who will be visiting our offices on Take Our Daughters to Work; as well as many ongoing activities. Check your area bulletin boards to stay abreast.

EAC Employee of the Month: Recent honorees of this award are: **Barb Golz, Debi Hinman, and Ken Coman.**

Labor Management Cooperation Committee

▸ **Denny Zeiler**

LMCC consists of representatives from the Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) and the Montana Public Employees Association (MPEA). Working in a collaborative spirit, we identify potential issues affecting labor relations and pursue shared solutions which meet the needs of both labor and management.

Most recently, the Committee's main focus has been the development of an alternate performance assessment tool. This project is the result of a mutual desire of management, staff, and MPEA for a performance appraisal system that is useful and meaningful for staff and management.

Initially, this project was bid out to a consultant to develop and propose performance appraisal guidelines to the LMCC. The action was taken because the LMCC determined that working as a group and only meeting on a monthly basis, it would be more efficient to hire a consultant with expertise in this field. However, based on the amount of information requested by the consultant, and the time it would take for the committee to provide this information, we concluded that there really wasn't much efficiency to be gained in using a consultant. The LMCC decided to undertake the project to design a new competency-based performance evaluation system for use in DLI.

Using the interest-based problem solving methodology, the LMCC has identified, defined and framed the issue, identified interests, determined what data will be needed, and brainstormed options. The process will include researching "best practices" in other states, consulting with professionals as a resource for development, and/or the evaluation of prepackaged software solutions. Commissioner Haffey provided the LMCC with a scope document at the meeting on March 25.

If you have any questions or concerns about competency-based performance evaluation, contact an LMCC member.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

January - March, 1998

LEAVING DLI during this period were:

Mandi Shulund, Hearings Bureau
Tim Kelly, Hearings Bureau
Lynnette Younger, JS Admin
Elaine Asbury, Bozeman JS
Nancy McIlhattan, Livingston JS
Theresa Scott, Budget Bureau
John Engebretson, Flathead JS Retired
Bev Bezanson, WC Regulation Retired
Greg Gullickson, Missoula JS
Lisa Linneweh, Billings JS
Joe Tobiness, Butte JS
Sheri Vukasin, UI Benefits
Sara Taylor, JS Admin
Sven Taffs, ERD Admin

NEW EMPLOYEES in Permanent Positions:

Robert Blanton, ESS,Polson JS
Sunni Phillips, Compliance Spec.,WC Regulation
Eric Lund, ISSS, JS Admin
Pat Trammelle, Attorney Spec.,Legal Services
Betty Bergstrom, Accountant, Fiscal Support
Anne Druce, Administrative Support, WC Claims
Adeline Miller, Personnel Specialist,Personnel
Carol Larkin, Administrative Support, Hearings Bureau

PROMOTIONS during this period:

Gary Schoer, ESS, JS Programs
Christy Robbins, Collection Tech.,UI Benefits
Mary Buswell, Mgmt. Analyst, UI Program Support
Deborah Wilson, WC Benefits Examiner, WC Claims
Al Downey, ESS Supervisor, Flathead JS
Cheryl Grey, Budget Analyst, Fiscal Support
Teresa O'Brien, Helena Phone Center Supervisor, UI
Marla Ducello, TRA Benefits Examiner, UI Benefits
Dave Cucciardi, Blgs Phone Center Supervisor, UI
Gary Holt, Data Management Unit Supervisor, WC Claims

Schleicher Honored for Community Work

▸ **Tina Hash**

The Hometown Helena Pride Committee recently awarded Bob Schleicher with a certificate of appreciation for his "outstanding service and contributions" to the Helena community.

Schleicher, a research specialist for the Office of Research and Analysis, has been a member of Hometown Helena Pride for over a year and has worked tirelessly as a member for such groups as COPS Leadership Council (Community Oriented Policing), Helena Tax Increment Financing Board, Helena Citizens' Council, Advantage Helena-Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Business Improvement District Special Events Committee, Kay McKenna Youth Foundation Board and the Performance Square Founding Committee.